

THE
FRENCH CONVERT:

Being a true Relation of
THE HAPPY CONVERSION

OF A
NOBLE FRENCH LADY,

FROM
*The Errors and Superstitions of Popery, to the
Reformed Religion, by means of a Protestant
Gardener her Servant.*

WHEREIN IS SHEWN,

Her great and unparalleled Sufferings, on the Account of her
said Conversion; as also her wonderful Deliverance from two
Assassins, hired by a Popish Priest to Murder her: And of her
miraculous Preservation in a Wood for Two Years; and how
she was at last providentially found by her Husband; who,
together with her Parents, were brought over to the embracing
of the True Religion, as were divers others also.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A brief Account of the present severe Persecutions of the
French Protestants.

THE THIRTEENTH EDITION.

BLACKBURN:

PRINTED BY J. WATERWORTH,

COPY OF A LETTER

Sent from a French Protestant Missionary in France, to
his Friend in London, with the following Relation.

My dear Friend,

HAVING received your letter of the 15th of April,
N. 2. I was not a little surprised, even in
my journey to Paris, to find you were settled in a
country, where you have the pleasure of enjoying
the society of the True Religion, a thing to be
desired above all other earthly things; and not
only that, but I am much more glad to find you
in France, than that the church should agree with
you and your friends, that you have been faithful
ever since you departed from me, and the rest of
your dear friends, in your journey up to us, with
particularity myself, labouring under many sufferings
and afflictions; I having, with many others,
suffered a long time in prison, for the sake of
a good conscience, afflicted with much sickness, by
reason of my close confinement, which (blessed be
the name of God, enabling me) I have borne with
patience, though many have died murthered by their
evil persecutors; yet the cry of innocent blood,
my friends, makes them cry, How hard it is to
kick against the pricks; yet my prayers are,
that instead of sending my faithful judgment on
these popish persecutors, God would turn their
hearts, enlighten their understandings, and make
them see the error of their ways, and repent of
the many evils they have done to the poor protestants.

COPY OF A LETTER,

Sent from a French Protestant Minister in France, to
his Friend in London, with the following Relation,

MY VERY GOOD FRIEND,

HAVING received your's the 13th of April,
N. S. I was not a little overjoyed, even in
my suffering, to hear you are well settled in a
country, where you have the freedom of enjoying
the exercise of the True Religion, a thing to be
valued above all other earthly blessings; and not
only that, but I am much more glad to find you
inform me, that the climate so well agrees with
you and your family, that you have been healthful
ever since you departed from me, and the rest of
your dear friends hear; though many of us, and
particularly myself, labour under many sufferings
and afflictions; I having, with many others,
languished a long time in prison, for the sake of
a good conscience, afflicted with much sickness, by
reason of my close confinement, which (blessed be
the name of God enabling me) I have borne with
patience, though many have died unpitied by their
cruel persecutors; yet, the cry of innocent blood,
may, in time, make them cry, How hard it is to
kick against the pricks;—yet, my prayers are,
that instead of sending any fearful judgement on
these popish adversaries, God would turn their
hearts, enlighten their understandings, and make
them see the error of their ways, and repent of
the many evils they have done to the poor protes-
tants,

*tants, without any manner of cause or provocation, to whom their rage and malice extend even beyond death: for they still continue their old way of denying them Christian burial. But this is all our comfort: It matters not where our bodies lye, if so be our souls are infolded in Christ's arms. Yet, among the miseries and threats of death, which I have undergone in taking care of the spiritual welfare of those that God has committed to my charge, I cannot but be greatly comforted when you tell me, the French Protestant Church in England flourishes; and that the members of it walk worthy of their calling, gaining by their inoffensive way of living, a good repute among strangers, when in their native country so much inhumanity appears towards those of the reformed profession: for the persecution in many places rages still, by their impoverishing of thousands of families. But not to be tedious to you, having nothing left to send you but my good wishes and prayers, except the inclosed account of a very strange but blessed alteration in the family of the Count ALANSON, a worthy nobleman, well known to you. I have drawn it up upon the strictest enquiry into the truth of all the material circumstances, as well as my sufferings, and spare of time that the care of those under my charge would permit; and send it to you as a token of my love, for the many kindnesses I have received at your hands; and that so you might communicate it to others, and make it public if you see occasion: that all may be made sensible of the wonderful goodness of Almighty God, and praise him for the works he doth for
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Copy of a Letter, &c.

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the children of men. For the certainty of what I have written, though I have been obliged for method sake, to use a few expressions of my own, you may firmly rely on my integrity, who am always a well-wisher to the health of your soul and body.

A. D'AUBORN.

THE

FRENCH CONVENT

In writing of the following relation, wherein
I injured innocence and oppressed virtue
does so eminently triumph over all the rage and
malice both of men and devils: I shall not
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oric, but lead the reader by the line of truth
into the adorable mystery of Divine Provi-
dence; which ancient philosophers in a series
of wonders as can scarce be paralleled. As
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sider how the Divine Goodness delights to
bring light out of darkness, and makes even
the wicked to confound themselves in their
own devices, that out of their evil designs he
may bring good to pass. For as Joseph's be-
ing sold into Egypt, and there falsely accused
of adultery, advanced him next to a throne,
and raised to the shame of his accusing mis-
treis and treacherous brethren; (though at
the beginning God meant it for good) that he
might be instrumental to preserve his father
and his household alive, and turned the malice
of the patriars into a blessing. So the mis-
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IN writing of the following relation, wherein injured innocence and oppressed virtue does so eminently triumph over all the rage and malice both of men and devils; I shall not study to adorn my stile with flowers of rhetoric, but lead the reader by the clue of truth into the adorable mysteries of Divine Providence; which are here displayed in a series of wonders as can scarce be paralleled. As an introduction to which, I will a little consider how the Divine Goodness delights to bring light out of darkness, and makes even the wicked to confound themselves in their own devices, that out of their evil designs he may bring good to pass. For, as Joseph's being sold into Egypt, and there falsely accused of adultery, advanced him next to a throne, and turned to the shame of his accusing mistress and treacherous brethren; (though at the beginning God meant it for good) that he might be instrumental to preserve his father and his household alive, and turned the malice of the patriarchs into a blessing: So the miseries and extraordinary sufferings of the noble Lady, whose story I am going to recite, were made use of by Divine Providence, as a means
of

of the conversion of her husband, parents, and many others, to the *true Religion*; which, as she as often said since, has been a very ample and glorious recompence. But I shall not anticipate what with more satisfaction you will find in the relation itself; which take as follows:

In Britany, one of the fairest provinces of France, there lately lived Count Alanfon, a person of noble extraction, and of an estate fuitable to the Greatness of his birth, and those noble qualities that enriched his mind. Who being a lover of military actions, was easily persuaded to serve the King in the wars, where having an eminent command given him, he behaved himself with a bravery that gained him the admiration of his enemies, the love of his friends, and fresh honours of his King, who took particular notice of his great performance. But in the intervals of two or three campaigns, he cast his eyes upon one Deidamia, a young Lady of a quality not inferior to himself in birth, whose beauty and virtue were equally attractive: to her he made his addresses, and the equality of their birth, and the suitability of their dispositions, made his conquest the more easy; so that in a little time they were contracted and married, to their mutual joy and satisfaction.

This happy couple having, for a whole winter, enjoyed the blessings of each other's mutual love and endearing affections, without the least umbrage of any interposing cloud that might give any allay to their happiness;

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at length the spring came on, and the armies gathering together, summoned Alanfon from the repofe he took in the foft embraces of his chafte and loving wife, to the field of war, to act his part again upon that ftage of honour, where he had before acquired fo much reputation. But he never appeared fo unwilling to court fame abroad as now, fince he muft, of neceffity, leave behind him the deareft part of himfelf; he had many ftugglings and combats in his mind, which feemed to be divided between love and honour: he was loath to leave his Lady, and yet unwilling to have his reputation fullied: and thefe different paffions of the mind caufed fuch an alteration in his countenance, that it was taken notice of by his Lady, who not knowing the caufe, was the more troubled at it; and therefore following him one day into the Garden, whither he had retired to confider with himfelf what he had beft to do, ſhe earneftly preffed him to let her know what it was that troubled him; for ſhe had for fome time, ſhe ſaid, obferved he was difquieted, but could not tell at what, and ſhe was fearful ſhe might, though ſhe knew it not, be the occaſion of it; adding, command me in any thing a wife can juſtly do, and I am all obedience. This tender carriage of his Lady added freſh fuel to the fire of his afflictions, and made him ſtill far more unwilling to leave her. Wherefore cauſing her to fit down by him, he told her, She was indeed the innocent occaſion of his trouble, for her great love and tendernefs to him had fo engaged his heart to her in reciprocal affec-

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tions,

tions, that he knew not how to think of leaving her, though honour called him loudly to the field. His lady, when he talked of leaving her, was hardly kept from swooning in his arms, and could not forbear saying, What! must we part then? ah, wretched Deidamia! and immediately she fell a weeping. Her tears did so prevail upon the Count, that love had now obtained an entire victory, and he resolved to stay at home with Deidamia; and therefore intreated her to dry up her tears, and be comforted; for he had now come to a resolution, rather to undergo some hard censures for staying at home, than by going to the camp to leave his dear Deidamia disconsolate. These kind assurances of her husband gave her that satisfaction, which soon shewed itself in a chearful countenance, and the endearing expressions she gave the Count on that occasion, made him conclude they were both happy in each other's love.

But behold the inconstancy of worldly happiness, and how little we can promise ourselves of it here! We may indeed both purpose and resolve, but we cannot secure ourselves from disappointments: the footsteps of divine Providence are often hard to trace. Hence it is that we are told by the inspired penman, "That the ways of God are in the deep, and his paths in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." And we see often, whatever pleasing prospect of felicity we have in view, some unforeseen occasion, or sudden turn of providence, destroys it, and in a moment deprives us of that happiness, which we had
promised

promised to ourselves for many years: and yet, these changes, to those that fear the Lord, are so disposed and ordered by God's providence, that in the end they evidently work together for their good. And thus it fell out in the instance before us: For whilst Alanfon and his Deidamia delighted in each other, and were both happy in the conjugal affection, an accident fell out, that put him under the necessity of going to the camp, which was, that a colonel's place in the regiment of Picardy being vacant, a relation of Alanfon's at court, out of a too officious kindness, put the king in mind of the good services of Alanfon, and desired his majesty to bestow that vacancy upon him: To which his majesty (being sensible of his former bravery and good service) readily consented, and ordered his commission to be sent to him; which was done accordingly. When Alanfon received this commission from the pursuivant who brought it, he gave him a generous reward for his pains; but was not very well pleased, either with the new honour his majesty had given him, nor with his kinsman's too officious kindness in procuring it; because it put him under a necessity of parting from his lady, which gave him a very sensible displeasure: But knowing he was by his commission engaged too far for a retreat, his care was how to make his Deidamia as easy as he could: and therefore calling her to take a turn with him in the garden, and leading her into an arbour covered with jessamine, he thus began to tell her the unwelcome news that had been brought

him. My dearest Deidamia, let me conjure you not to be troubled at what I am going to tell you, but if you will oblige me, do it by shewing your resolution and fortitude of mind; and yet I cannot but own, that our resolves, like little heaps of sand, are quickly brought to nothing; but the decrees of heaven, like the foundations of the earth, are fixed for ever. 'Twas in this very harbour, my dearest Deidamia, that I resolved to stay at home with thee, and not return to the campaign in Flanders: and I appeal to him who knows my heart, how firmly I intended; but see here, how I am forced against my will to break my resolution: (and with that shewed her the commission the king had sent him, to be colonel of the regiment of Picardy) and now you see my Deidamia, the necessity that lies upon me to leave you for a time; but though our bodies be divided, we will have one soul and love whilst providence denies us to live together. And whilst I in the field am fighting for my king and country, you shall stay here and pray for my success: And if it pleases God that I return, (which I do not doubt at all, for heaven I am sure will hear your fervent prayer) it will be a new addition to my joy, to lay those laurels I shall win in the battle at Deidamia's feet. Poor Deidamia heard this heavy news with a sad heart, but answered with piety and prudence worthy of herself, that since what happened was not of his seeking, but what the providence of God had called him to, she thought it was her duty (though she could hardly do it without reluctance)

tance) to acquiesce in the divine disposal of human actions, and would endeavour to stifle her resentments, rather than give him any farther trouble : Alanfon being no less pleased with Deidamia's prudence than her kind affection, which he expreffed by feveral tender things he told her, applied himfelf to the getting ready of his equipage, in order to his departure ; and then fettling the affairs of his family, ordered Antonio his chaplain, who was a friar of the order of St. Francis, to fay a folemn mafs for his fuccefs in the field, and the protection of his lady and family in his abfence ; recommending his deareft Deidamia to the care of Antonio his chaplain, and Fro-novius his fteward to his houfhould, in thefe words : To your care in my abfence, I recommend the fafety and welfare of my beloved lady, the moft virtueft and loving of wives ; and charge you, as you expect to anfwer it to God and me, be obedient to all her commands ; comfort and cherifh her in her folitude, and fee that all my domeftics pay the like exact refpects. This and much more, they faithfully promifed to obferve. Then giving liberally to each fervant, and having notice that his equipage was ready, and divers gentlemen on horfeback waiting to accompany him, he took his folemn leave of his dear Deidamia, whole fad prefaging heart was overcome with grief to that degree, that fhe could only fpeak thefe few prophetic words : Ah, my dear lord, may heaven prevent my fears ! But my poor heart forebodes that this will be a long and fatal parting. To which the Count replied,

replied, do not cast down thyself dear Deidamia, by the indulging of such melancholy fancies; but assure yourself, I'll hasten my return as much as possible, and I will send to you as often as I can. And in the mean time shall commit you to the protection of the Almighty, the blessed Virgin Mother, and all the holy saints and angels; and sealing his affection on her lips with gentle kisses, he took his leave of her and rid away, not thinking he had left an innocent dove to the protection of two ravenous vultures.

It is not much to my purpose to tell you, how well he was received at the head of his command by the Duke of Luxemburgh, or what brave exploits his courage carried him through, since neither fame, nor the public news from Paris have been wanting to speak his commendation; I therefore omit it, (unless in some passages, where it will, in the thread of this amazing relation, be necessary to mention some particulars) and shall continue with the sorrowful Deidamia, who after his departure, seemed to have banished all comfort from her breast; all that she found was in her devotions and prayers to Almighty God, for his protection and safe return, greatly affecting solitude; and as much as she could, avoiding the visits of divers ladies, who (as they said) came to make her merry, and divert her melancholy, she being very well beloved both by the nobility and gentry, for her comely carriage, modest behaviour, sweetness of temper, and affability.

In the cool of the day, she usually made it her business to retire into her Garden pensive and alone, it being by the care and diligence of the Gardener, kept and ordered like another Paradise, stored with great variety of choice plants and flowers, adorned with pleasant fountains, and several delightful harbours, shaded over with intertwining jessamine, in which she and her absent lord had passed some joyful, as well as sad hours, and at the remembrance of them would sadly weep, then pray (according to the custom of the papists, who allow praying to saints) to the tutelary saints for his protection : And so drying up her tears would walk thence again, taking but little rest in any place : But one time passing by a bed of tulips, she espied Bernard her Gardener (for so he was called) busy in watering them, and erecting such as declined their drooping heads, occasioned by the heat of the sun's too scorching beams ; she had often in this man observed a harmless native innocence, accompanied with an accute ingenuity ; (and indeed a Gardener who understands his business as he ought to do, must be an ingenious man) and therefore imagined it might administer to her some advantage to hold discourse with him, in what related to the mysteries of Gardening, thinking it no undervaluing, though he was her menial servant, since she had often read, "That kings, princes, and other great and wise men had voluntarily become of this occupation : that Adam, when Governor of all the world, was employed in it by God himself ;" so that coming close to him, whilst his
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hands were busied at his work ; the man by his ear (his back being towards her) being informed of somebody's approach, suddenly started up, and seeing his beautiful lady near him, was a little surprized, and would have retired to give her the more freedom in her walks, but she prevented him by saying, Bernard, Pray do not let me hinder you in your business ; I come on purpose to observe your dexterity in Gardening ; I see you mind it with a just diligence, though your lord is absent. Madam, (replied he) I beg your ladyship's pardon, in that I tell you I am no eye servant, as, well knowing I must give an account to God, as well as to man, if I am negligent in what I promise to perform, and am intrusted with. Deidamia stood surprized at the man's plain, but ingenious reply ; and changing somewhat the manner of her discourse, asked him divers questions about the virtues, natures, qualities, and productions of flowers and plants, &c. in all which he satisfied her to her admiration ; by which she perceived him to be better learned in the mysteries of nature, than she expected from one of his profession. And to be brief, she often held such innocent conversation with him, when at any time she found him busy in the Garden, being much delighted to hear him discourse how much of the Wisdom and Goodness of God might be learned from the works of creation ; for he had a peculiar faculty of spiritualizing his employment, and making his business serve like Jacob's ladder, to carry him from earth to heaven. Which sometimes caused
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her to reflect that this man was something more than he appeared to be, (indeed she was not much mistaken) so that entertaining a good opinion of him, she ordered his lodging to be changed for a better, and his coarse and homely commons to be enlarged, above what was usual to those of his profession and degree.

But now Antonio the chaplain, however he had appeared like a saint to his master, began to shew himself a devil to his mistress, and too plainly shewed his cloven foot; though above fifty years of age, he had for some time harboured lustful desires towards the fair and beautiful Deidamia, that he was now resolved to attempt her chastity. And though her virtue and her spotless chastity, might very well have kept him from pursuing his unclean desires, yet he flattered himself with hopes of obtaining his end, by corrupting the judgment: In which he found himself very much mistaken, as the sequel will declare. For the Divine Goodness had a farther work to do for Deidamia; who being altogether ignorant of what this wretch designed against her honour, frequented her beloved Garden as she used to do; and one evening hearing the Gardener reading in a lonely arbour, where he thought himself secure (for he had industriously concealed his being a Protestant from any of the family) her curiosity to hear him, made her draw near so softly, that he could not hear her: He was then reading the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from the 20th to the end of the 23d verse, viz. *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are*
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clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse, because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as a God, neither were thankful but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened ; professing themselves to be wise they became Fools, and changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an image like to corruptible Man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."

Having thus far proceeded, he paused, and with eyes lifted up to heaven, gave Glory unto God, that he had preserved him blameless from these offences against his divine Majesty, which through ignorance and superstition, had overspread the greatest part of Europe. " O Lord, continued he, I humbly beseech thee, as I have already suffered a persecution for thy name's sake, and for the sake of a good conscience, so never let me depart from the ways of thy truth, to change thy incorruptible Glory into an image made like corruptible man : " And when he had said this, tears stood in his eyes, and his words were succeeded by sighs.

Deidamia, who had all this while attentively listened, found something in her mind that made a sudden uneasy alteration, and thought to have gone away undiscovered ; but then again, her zeal for the Romish religion, which she thought he had reproached by detesting image-worship, carried her so far as she resolved to give him a sharp reprimand, lest he persisting further, until discovered by others, might

might ruin himself; though her Goodness and gentle nature was not for working him any injury by revealing it, but never was a man more surprized than Bernard, when he saw her, whom at that time of day he little suspected, as not being usual; yet collecting his scattered senses, he arose from his seat, and withal endeavoured to hide his bible under his coat, thinking she had newly come, and might neither have heard him read, nor seen his bible; but she in a frowning manner, contrary to the wonted sweetness of her temper, commanded him to deliver it to her, that the flames might conceal his fault; and told him, she would not for that time discover his being conversant with a book so strictly by the church prohibited to the laity; for (continued she) it is enough that we believe as the church believes, without farther dispute, or puzzling ourselves with those scruples and niceties which, in all probability, we may make a false construction of, and wrest even those scriptures, that are the rule of our faith, to our own damnation.

This smart discourse, and the frowns of the fair Deidamia in this case, did not so much daunt Bernard as in another of less concern it might have done; but with some assurance, he replied, "Ah, madam! I little thought of being surprized by you at my devotion, but since I am, I cannot grant what you demand; rather you may command my body to the flames, and as a willing martyr I will sooner go than betray the cause of God, in delivering up his holy word to be consumed, in which

are contained all things necessary to salvation : and it would be in me an apparent contempt of that salvation, should I voluntarily, or through fear cast it from me. As to your saying, madam, that the church has prohibited the laity the use of this sacred book, especially in a known tongue, I readily grant it ; but, O most virtuest lady, you little know their policy in that ; it is not that they fear or care what misconstructions men make of it ; but because it is like arrows in the hand of a giant, strong against their worldly interest, plainly discovering their errors and gross idolatries. He would have proceeded, but the heat of zeal prompted her hastily to interrupt him, saying, surely Bernard, you are distracted, or else what is worse, an Heretic : I took you to be wiser, and more reasonable, when I discoursed with you the other day. Truly, madam, replied he, as for being in my right senses, I bless Almighty God, he has in his mercy hitherto continued them to me : and for my being an Heretic, pardon me ; if St. Paul answers for me, when he was accused before Felix, saying, "*But this I confess unto thee, after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets.*" Upon this, Deidamia, who by nature was all Goodness, Gentleness, and Affability, began to moderate her anger, and consider a little what he had said ; yet the zeal for the religion she professed, made her mildly rebuke him, and lay before him the danger he was in, if his opinion was discovered ; bidding him be cautious

cautious and wise in what he did; though, for her part, he need not fear but she would lock up what she had discovered, in her breast, and it would pass no farther; and so departing, left him in some confusion.

Deidamia, retiring to her chamber, began to consider what had passed, and remembered she had often wept in her tender years, when she heard the cruelties the Roman Catholics used toward the Hugonots, or protestants in France; and disapproving of their persecuting spirit as not of God; whose chiefest attribute is Mercy, tender Compassion, and Forgiveness; when, on the contrary, she found those who made religion so much their boast, so very cruel, that, far from the instance of our Saviour's refusing to call for fire from heaven to consume those who had injuriously and despitefully used him, they made their very worship and devotions a snare, to bring those under their cruel handlings, who had in no wise offended them, but in being separated from them, and moving according to the dictates of their conscience. She had likewise observed the harmlessness and inoffensive manner of living in the persecuted, and often shewed some dislike of the looseness and unchristian practices of the persecutors; so that although she had a good opinion of the Romish Religion, as having been brought up in it from her infancy, yet had she not so of many of the professors of it, who apparently derogated from the ways of virtue, and seemed to encourage vice.

This wrought some labourings in her mind, through the gracious operation of the holy spirit;

spirit; and in her night thoughts, more seriously reflecting on many things, and particularly on the Gardener's expression out of St. Paul's words to Felix the Governor, inferring from thence, that it must be the sincerity of the heart towards God, more than the shew, or outward name or profession of any religion, that renders the person acceptable in his sight. In the midst of these cogitations and debates within herself, she found something (as if it were by an over-ruling power) strongly moved her to a desire of farther conversing with Bernard, about the fundamentals of his religion; which, by the Popish priests, as well in their pulpits, as private conversation, had been represented so odious, damnable, and to be detested.

The morning no sooner summoned the Gardener to visit his flowers and plants, and to perform his usual task in watering and ordering them, but Deidamia, who had taken little rest that night, arose; and having performed her orison, and then refreshed herself with a moderate reflection, took an opportunity between that and dinner time to enter the Garden privately, at a door that opened into it from her apartment; and to screen the better what she intended from prying eyes, took divers turns, and gathered posies and flowers; and then fanning herself as if the heat offended her, passing many winding alleys, over-spread with pleasant shades, she came to the before-mentioned arbour, and again surprized the Gardener in his meditations: the man was not under any consternation

tion at her coming, but rising and bowing low, would have departed out of good manners, to give her the sole freedom of that pleasant bower: but she laid her commands on him to stay, saying, she had considered of his former discourse, and had made it her business to find him out, that he might give her some better reason for the opinion he held, than yet he had done.

His modesty, and the humble thoughts he conceived of himself, would scarce give him leave to sit down, though she often commanded him so to do, but at last he complied, and then she asked him, upon what ground and foundation the basis of his religion was fixed.

Gard. It is founded on the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which were written by men inspired by the Holy Ghost, and given for our instruction and learning; it is only the word of God that can warrant the truth of any profession in religious matters; and that we protestants (through God's assistance) labour to conform and live up to.

Deidamia. Ay, but you may be mistaken in the misinterpreting the scriptures, and fall into gross heresies, as our church charges you; and therefore has strictly forbid the laity of our communion to meddle with them, lest, like weapons put into the hands of ideots or madmen, they injure themselves and others thereby.

Gard. Ah! Lady, shall I be free, and deal plainly with you in this point?

Deid. With all my heart; let me hear what you can say in answer to it.

Gard.

Gard. All scriptures are given for our learning. God is willing we should know his revealed will, that we may be the better enabled to perform it. St. Paul commends the Bereans, and calls them *noble*, because they searched the scriptures, to see whether the things they heard were so or no; and we have many commands for this—as, *Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read*, Isaiah 34. 16. *They were more noble, in that they searched the scriptures daily*, Acts. 17. 11. *Let the word of God dwell richly in you*, Col. 3. 16. *From a child thou hast known the scriptures*, 2. Tim. 3. 15. *Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, Eph. 6. 17. and many others that I might mention, which are to be found in the scriptures; and this not commanded to *some* but to *all* that seek salvation.

Deid. Certainly, if our church had seen this fit, they would not have denied it; but being dangerous to souls, it ought to be restrained.

Gard. It is indeed dangerous to break God's commandments, and to teach men so to do, and to make the word of God of none effect by human tradition. We know the woes Christ pronounced against the Pharisees for these things.

Deid. Why, who are guilty of this? the Church of Rome, the holy catholic church, as it has in many ages been stiled, is not surely spotted with such crimes.

Gard. I wish I could say it was not, but it deeply is guilty, as in many other particulars, so most eminently in this, That it professes, no man is obliged to receive the scriptures as
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the word of God, or to believe any of it, but from the testimony of your church; and to awe men to such a belief, threats of damnation are used, as well as the magistrates swords and cruel torments by inquisitions; and indeed it is not done without Ground; this is done to hinder prying into their gross idolatries, errors, and superstition, derogatory to the scriptures, and exprefs command of God.

Deid. Sure you are besides yourself: nor can you prove this; but being fallen from the church, do this only in prejudice and spite, to lay a stain upon its virgin innocence.

Gard. No: it is apparent from the word of God, and even from reason itself, to those that will consider, and are not blinded with ignorance, which your church, in her sense, truly stiles the Mother of Devotion.

Deid. Can any such thing be in a church that is infallible? and to prove that it is so, it is said to be built upon St. Peter; he is the rock spoken of, and this rock doth, together with St. Peter, include his successors; and the church built on this rock (united to and built upon the Pope) is infallible; for it is said *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Gard. Pardon me Lady, if I say, there is no agreement among the churchmen about this infallible judge: some will have it the Pope, some a general council, and others both; none of your writers have yet concluded on it. However these words are perverted; for it is more probable, that not St. Peter's person, but his doctrine or confession concerning Christ, i. e. the rock upon which the church is built.

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Scripture

Scripture is the best interpreter : it is not Peter, but Christ is the foundation of the church, as here in my bible you may see, by the 28th chapter and 16th verse of Ifaiah, compared with 1 Pet. 2, 6, 7, 8, which you may please to read, (which she did.) It is moreover expressly said, 1 Cor. 3, 11. *Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid which is Jesus Christ.* And this is the more considerable, because he speaks against those that made the apostles to be the foundations, saying I am of Paul, another of Apollos, or Cephas; and if this is spoke of Peter, no more is said of him here, than is spoken of all the prophets and apostles, Ephes. 2, 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.*

Deid. Well, I am not much learned in this mystery; but pray, what as erroneous can you assign in our worship, or any other thing the church holds as absolutely necessary?

Gard. The paying divine adoration to Angels and Saints, expressly contrary to God's commands, and derogatory to his honour, who alone ought to be worshipped in heaven and earth; and to worship any other, either saint or angel, or any creature, is idolatry, and a breach of the second commandment.

Deid. Nay, not too hastily; we do not worship the angels and saints as God, with the highest worship, which is only proper to God, but with an inferior kind of religious worship, that they may present our supplications to him.

Gard. There is no intercessor or mediator but Christ Jesus, who is appointed to perform
that

that office: *If any man wants wisdom, let him ask of God, James i. 5. Neither of Saints nor Angels. Come to me, saith our Saviour, and I will in no wise cast you out.* This free invitation shews us, he alone was to receive our petitions, and present them to his father. Image-worship is also brought cunningly by priests, to gain worldly advantage; and pretended miracles, to draw the ignorant to pay the devotion more at one place than at another, imposed on the ignorant for lucre's sake.—I could say much more, but I fear to offend you.

Deid. No you do not; but let us come nearer to the main controversy. What think you of transubstantiation? Is not Christ corporally present in the sacraments?

It is a misrepresentation of our Saviour's words, for if he had so meant, as the church of Rome holds it, when he broke the bread, he must have held himself in his own hands, and eat himself, yet sit still whole and entire at the table; his whole body must be in the mouth of every communicant at once, and that body in millions of places at one time, broken and unbroken, and be subject to putrefaction; and therefore the words, *This is my body*, do intend, *This doth signify my body*. And upon the same account our Saviour is called a *Door*, a *Rock*, a *Vine*: yet none can be so void of understanding, to believe he was turned into any of these. And therefore, when he broke the bread, and gave the cup, he did it only that when christian congregations were met on solemn occasions to cele-

brate his worship, they should do it in remembrance of him, till his coming in glory at the last day, as the immediate words explain, and it is absurd to believe that the Priest's uttering a few words over a wafer, can make it a God, or that body offered on the cross.

Deid. You amaze me: But pray, What do you hold about Purgatory? Is there such a place, where souls are to endure their purgations after death, that go not immediately to heaven, and by masses and prayer may be released sooner or later.

Gard. It is a tradition lately brought in, and with it hath brought much increase of wealth to the church. The word of God allows only heaven for those who shall be made vessels of mercy; and hell for those whose sins have provoked him to cast them down to those dismal regions of sorrow, and eternal woe: no prayers after death being available.

Deid. These notions are as new as strange to me, have you any authentic proof of this.

Gard. Yes, the revealed word of God is sacred proof beyond denial: *The rich man in hell lifted up his eyes being in torment, Luke xvi. 23. They shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the other shall be cast into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Mat. xxviii. 12. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned, Mat. xxvi. 16.* Here is no such thing as purgatory to be found; it is only the blood of Christ that purgeth us from our sins; and from all uncleanness of flesh and spirit, to present our souls blameless and

and unspotted to his Father: By this I understand those that die in the Lord need not our prayers, and those that die in their sins no prayers can avail, for in the grave there is no repentance; *As the tree falls, so it must lie; whether it falls towards the North, or towards the South, where it falls there it must lie.* There are only two extremes, North and South, nor middle way or purgatory for it to fall in. And as death leaves us, so judgment will assuredly find us.

He would have proceeded, but she stopt him, saying, Pray how long have you been of this opinion?

Gard. Ever since God was pleased to enlighten me with his grace, to be attentive to his holy word, and to be guided by it.

Deid. Was you ever then of the church of Rome?

Gard. In my younger years I was, but thro' mercy, being made sensible by the scriptures of the corruptions and errors of that church, by the assistance of worthy divines, I hope with St. Paul, Nothing shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. I will not offend your ladyship's chaste ears, with the history of the debaucheries and wicked lives of divers popes, and most of the clergy; but will pray to heaven to defend you from either lust or revenge. And since I have, by a free confession, put my life in your hands, I humbly submit it to your Goodness, to——

Here again she interrupted him, and demanded, why the religion he professed was called the Protestant Religion?

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To which he replied, as for being so called it is to distinguish it from that of the Romish; it came from several princes and cities in Germany; who, upon the preachings of good men, and their exemplary lives, protest against the usurpations of the Romish Church, and its errors. That it was no new doctrine, but the truth of Primitive Christianity, confessed, asserted, and purged from the corruptions of Popery, taking the revealed will of God for its guide.

At this Deidamia paused a while; and then taking his bible, looked over the sacred proofs he had turned down in order; and her colour went and came so, that he easily perceived her mind was labouring under some difficulties; and so giving it to him again, went away without speaking one word.

This somewhat perplexed the Gardener, as fearing she was displeased with what he had said; but her sending for him privately to her chamber the next morning, under the notion of bringing her some choice flowers, banished all fear in him, when they two being only left together, she gently led him to the closet, and shutting the door, to be more private, said, Bernard, (fetching a deep sigh) your yesterday's discourse has much broken my last night's rest; I have been meditating on it, and I find abundance of reason in what you say; you have, as St. Paul said in another case, almost persuaded me to be of your persuasion. I wish to God, most virtuous Lady, replied he, I might be an humble instrument in God's hand, to do any thing that may redound

redound to his glory, and the good and welfare of your precious and immortal soul, without hazarding your temporal quiet and peace, or exposing you to any danger; though for a crown of life and immortality, all earthly things are to be despised; and the holy apostle accounts all this world's good but as dross and dung, in comparison of enjoying Christ Jesus. Well, said she, this is my aim, and if God enables me with his assisting grace, I hope, through his mercy, to attain it. I have indeed, continued she, to my great Grief, observed the loose and profane manner of living of those that profess our religion: alledging, that a confession, with absolution, and some other works, will purge them from their sins, and gain them that blessedness in the end, which I could never heartily believe they would obtain by them: and since I have more seriously considered God's word expressly to the contrary, I cannot believe that any thing but sincere and unfeigned repentance, in the cause of an unspotted life, can purchase, (thro' the merits of my saviour) those endless Glories and transcendant blessings that God hath promised to poor mortals.—She would have proceeded, but the falling tears stopped her utterance, and Bernard had an inward rejoicing to see her brought to this pass; whereupon he comforted her with good advice, and the cordials of God's mercies and promises. In brief, he had made her sensible of the errors she had been brought up in, and then opened, from point to point, the cheat of pretended miracles and relicks, the imposing on people with
pardon

pardon and indulgence, in order to get money, the whoredoms, murders, and incests of many popes, cardinals, and prelates of the Romish Church; their unreasonableness in prohibiting priests marriage, which is immediately appointed by God, and the allowing them by canons and decrees the embraces of concubines, or to commit adultery, expressly contrary to the command of the Almighty, for as much as he has expressly said those that do these things shall not inherit eternal life.—He would have proceeded, but hearing the sound of feet coming up stairs, she hastened him down a back way, with so much precipitation, that he left his Bible behind him, which she luckily seeing, locked up in a scrutoire.

I have told you before, that father Antonio the priest, forgetting his function, duty, and distance, gave way to his unruly and lawless passion, and was then blundering up stairs to find her in private, having almost flustered himself with wine, on purpose either to be more confident in his wicked design, to tell her the story of his nauseous love, or rather lust; or that, if he were reprov'd, he might have some slender excuse for his impertinency, and lay (as too many do) the blame of their folly on that which is, rather an aggravation of their crime, that is their Drunkenness; and so suddenly he came, that putting his nose over the upper-step, just as the Gardener posted out of the private door, he had a glimpse of the back-parts of his garments, as it afterwards appeared; but at that time took no
notice

notice of any such thing. Deidamia seeing Antonio coming towards her in a very pleasant humour, demanded with a modest decency, what occasion brought him thither to disturb her retirement?

Ah! (said the impudent priest, who could not long keep down his boiling passion) “ your two fair eyes, sweet lady, like load-stones, have drawn me to you ; that beauteous tempting face of yours has made me forget myself with my duty to my lord, and the trust he reposed in me.” Why certainly, said Deidamia, (calling in patience to bridle in her passion) you are beside yourself, Antonio.— What mean you by this kind of discourse? If I am beside myself (replied he almost crying) your fair self is the cause of it, whose beauty like arrows, have wounded my heart and sickened my brain ; I wish I had never seen such an amiableness in woman-kind ; but since I have been so unfortunate as to be your fettered captive, take some compassion on me, and ease my sufferings.” What sufferings? replied Deidamia, frowning, or what can be the sense of all this loose stuff? “ Why then, replied he, to be serious ; in plain terms, I love you, and that so passionately, that unless you condescend to make me suitable returns, I shall have no peace nor quiet ; but must be miserable and wretched eternally.” Then said she, be you so ; what have you seen of any loose misbecoming behaviour in me, that you should dare to speak thus to me ; This, like a thunder-bolt, struck him mute ; when smoothing her brows, and growing a little calmer,

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she said, come, come Antonio, I took you for another man; you profess sanctity, and admonish others to lead a holy life; is this pretension then real, or is it only feigned, to try my virtue? I protest, said he, holding up both his hands, it is real, and I cannot help it. Why, says she, would you commit so great a wickedness if you might, and make yourself guilty of a crime so heinous? Ah! lady, replied he, if that be all, I can absolve you by the power given me by the See of Rome: consent and let me enjoy you, your penance shall be always easy: I'll get a dispensation for your marriage vows from the Pope, with pardon, indulgences, or any thing, for sins past, and those that are to come: nay, I'll do any thing, so I do not fall under your displeasure: let me alone for the rest, and—

This insolence so much displeased the virtuous lady, that she could hear no more, nor bear it any longer; but commanded him out of her presence: yet could not be rid of him, till she threatened to call up the rest of her servants. Whereupon he went muttering away: and for two days after, as much as possible he could, he shunned coming into her presence; which much pleased her, for she could not behold him but with horror and detestation.

This attempt, however, in one sense, (thru' the over-ruling providence and goodness of God, who is wonderful in council, and excellent in working, and can make the greatest wickedness of his creatures serve the purpose of his own glory) worked to her advantage;
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for she believed now all true that the Gardener had told her, about the wicked debauched lives of the Romish clergy, since this villainous priest had not scrupled to prefer the Pope's pardon for no less than adultery, and that before it was committed; by which means or encouragement, she plainly saw it must consequently be that they frequently tempted easy and ignorant people to the commission of many sins; therefore she resolved to leave these blind guides, and take the word of God for her leader and instructor; forbearing to come to confession, or hear mass, sometimes upon pretence of indisposition, and at other times purposely by going abroad, at the usual times of either; and holding some other conferences with the Gardener, which, (as to particulars) for brevity's sake, I must of necessity pass over.

She found in herself a strange aversion to the religion she had been brought up in; and having procured a Bible in the French tongue, took such delight in reading it, that whenever she had time to retire, it was not out of her hand; yet she kept this as secret as possible; and not being ready at it herself, got the Gardener to turn her down such proofs as were the strongest arguments against the errors of popery, and where the abominations of the mystical Babylon were pointed at. This he joyfully did, and gave praise to God who had made him instrumental in so good a work; though he was not ignorant, his life was liable to pay for it, if it were discovered. She likewise laid aside her beads and crucifix, con-

versed no more with rosaries or the legends of pretended saints; and though she found some temptations and fears at the beginning, yet frequently praying to God she overcame satan's wiles, and found abundance of joy and comfort enlightening her soul, so that she could not forbear breaking out into raptures of praise and thanksgiving, for the wonderful change (by so strange and unexpected means) wrought in her soul.

Whilst this virtuest lady and the Gardener held their private correspondence, in discoursing of the things of God, and encouraging and exhorting each other to perseverance and steadfastness in the truth, Antonio and Fronovius, equally burning with lustful desire to enjoy the tender beauties of the fair Deidamia, were plotting and contriving how their lawless designs might best be brought about (tho' each plotted by himself, for as yet they were ignorant of each other's passion.) The villainous priest (as you have already heard) had been repulsed with indignation, by the chaste lady, which inwardly tormented him, and brought him almost to his wit's end; but the other (Fronovius) had made no trial of her virtue, and waited a favourable opportunity to do it; and therefore he thinks, meditates, and casts many things in his mind, till at last his passion emboldening him, he was resolved to break the ice with a letter; and if she took no notice of that, to second it with a personal address: but how he should do this with privacy and safety, he was at a stand for a time; for he feared to trust any person to deliver it, lest his

his criminal love should take air: and to deliver it himself, would look too dastardly, as if he was not capable, or at least, durst not speak for himself; however, in a little while, he met with a fit opportunity; for Deidamia accidentally dropping her handkerchief, as she passed through a large Gallery that led to her apartment, he carefully took it up, and folding up his letter in it, which he had ready sealed by him, he gave it to her Gentlewoman to give it to her lady, telling her he found it in the long Gallery. The Gentlewoman knowing the handkerchief to be her lady's, immediately carried it to her, who received it from her without knowing any thing of a letter being in it; and afterwards accidentally taking the handkerchief out of her pocket, the letter dropped out upon the Ground, which she taking up, and looking upon the superscription, was extremely surprized to find it directed to herself; and hastily opening it, was much more so to find the contents thereof as followeth;

PARDON me, most lovely Deidamia, if your beauty makes me forget the station I am in, and emboldens me to own a passion I have laboured in vain to hide. To be brief, dear Lady, I am so captivated by your charms and singular perfections, that I am constrained to say, I love you infinitely above all mortal creatures; and since it appears to me unreasonable, that any one man should monopolize so inestimable a treasure, give me leave to hope, and suffer me not to languish and die, but render the balm of your kindness to
cure

*cure the wounds which your bright eyes have made
in your otherwise wretched servant,*

FRONOVIVS.

The reading of this letter filled her with blushes, anger, and amazement, at the unparalleled boldness and villainy of the author of it, and at first she was resolved to commit it to the flames, or to tear it in pieces; but upon second thoughts, she laid it up in her closet, where she vexed and fretted herself, that she was thus left among such ungrateful wretches, that dared so much as to suspect her virtues, and measure them by their own wicked and filthy inclinations, as to presume she would defile her marriage-bed; being more grieved for this discovery than the former; for she knew the priest had something of the libertine in him, but this man she held to be honest and virtuously inclined till now; and to him she thought to have discovered Antonio's folly, if he persisted in it, that by shame and reproof he might have reclaimed him. But now she scarce knew whom to trust; and could not therefore but tremble at the apprehensions of some violence that might be offered her from those lustful miscreants, whose sight now very much displeased her. She thought once or twice of displaying them, but found their authority in the family was so great, that in her lord's absence she could not do it: Whereupon she fell on her knees to implore God's mercy and protection, commending herself wholly to his care and providence, and begging of him to be her guardian and protector.

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Though Deidamia's mind, on those surprising attempts of her honour, was variously tossed, till at last she came to a settled resolution prudently to conceal what had passed, at least till her lord came home, for fear of scandal and disturbance: yet Fronovius might well read in her countenance, whenever he came into her presence, that she had read his letter, and how she repented it; which made him struggle to overcome his passion, but in vain; for like oil thrown on fire, the opposition his lewd desires met with, made him burn the fiercer; so that he resolved to find an opportunity to throw himself at her feet, and discover his passion to her by word of mouth; and whilst he waited for a convenient time and place to do it, he perceived the Gardener often to go in and out very chearful, as highly pleased and contented; and that though he only carried some fruits and flowers, yet his frantic passion and jealousy made him believe there was something more in it. Antonio the priest had also observed the like, and had much the same sentiments, which emboldened them the more to persist in their wicked and unclean desires, and to continue to persecute the chaste lady with their detested proffers of lawless love; concluding, that if one of so low a rank could be in favour, they in time could not miss of obtaining what they thought; and so blinded with passion, and pursuing what they aimed at, (though, as has been said, unknown to each other) they kept a watchful eye over the Actions of Deidamia; whose mind was taken up in contemplating
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the divine perfections of him, who is fairer than the children of men, being every day more confirmed in the truth of her religion, blessing and praising God, that by so wonderful and unexpected a means, had brought her out of darkness and errors, into the marvellous light of his truth, and engaged her heart to embrace and entertain it above her chief joy; partly looking on the trouble she had from Antonio and Fronovius, those brethren in iniquity, as temptations or trials to confirm her the more, by overcoming them, in the Doctrine she had so lately embraced; in which she firmly resolved to persevere against all temptations whatever.

But whilst these things passed, Fronovius had received no other answer to his letter but Deidamia's angry and much changed countenance towards him, which he would not take for an absolute repulse, and therefore was resolved to have her positive answer; to obtain which, as Deidamia was one morning leaning upon the window in her chamber, and looking into the Garden, he stole softly up stairs, and was got into her chamber, just behind her, before she heard him, when suddenly turning about, and seeing him in a dejected posture, she was very much surprized, and trembling at the sight, whilst he by many words endeavoured to shew the Greatness of his passion; but having somewhat recollected her spirits, she, with an angry countenance, spake to him thus: "Why how now, Fronovius? What business have you here, thus to steal into my chamber unawares?"

wares? This is such an affront, a piece of impudence and rudeness, as better becomes a thief than the steward of my household; and the filthy errand that you come on, is far more criminal than your coming. What have you ever seen of lightness in my carriage that should make you thus audacious, or give you the least hope to succeed in your unlawful and wicked desires? I command you to be gone: And know, that if you persist in your impudence and folly, I will speedily take those methods, that shall issue in your deserved shame and confusion."

He would have replied, but she forthwith went out of her chamber and would not hear him.

This absolute denial and severe reprimand, filled Fronovius full of confusion, and almost made him hopeless; but after some reflection, he strongly fancied, that the opposition he met with proceeded not from the lady's virtue, but from the greater inclination she had for some rival, who enjoyed those favours which he had been pursuing; and he supposed the Gardener to be the man, because he had received some particular marks of her favour since the departure of the Count Alanson. Being thus persuaded, he was resolved if it were possible, to make a plain discovery: and to this end, he planted himself privately one evening near the back stairs, that led out of the Garden into Deidamia's apartment (for that way he thought this supposed rival must come) and indeed he had not waited long before a person came by, and went up those
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stairs, whom he softly followed to the stairs-foot; the darkness of the night hindered him from discerning who the person was that went by him, but he doubted not but that it was the Gardener, and having listened at the bottom of the stairs, hearing no door open, nor any key to turn, he imagined the door was left open on purpose, and therefore resolved to go up himself, and surprize them in the very act of their unlawful love: he had no sooner resolved thus, but he heard somebody come softly down stairs; as soon as the person came to the bottom of the stairs, Fronovius boldly seizes on him, and demanded what business he had there at that late time of night? but was extremely surprized to meet with, instead of Bernard the Gardener, Antonio the priest; who then Fronovius thought had been with Deidamia. On speaking big words to Antonio, and threatening to kill him for the dishonour he had done his lord in violating his bed, the poor priest, (who was almost dead with fear, and extremely confounded at this accident) trembling, told Fronovius, that if he would save his life, he would ingenuously tell him all he knew: which Fronovius promising, Antonio told him the story of his love-addresses, violent passion, and the repulses he met with. That however, being jealous of the Gardener, and not finding him in his lodgings, (for it seems Deidamia had newly appointed him another unknown to Antonio) he suspected he might be with his lady; where, desiring to detect him and bring him to punishment, he had undertaken to

to come at this unseasonable time; but the doors being fast locked, and after a long listening, hearing no stir nor whispering, was returning back again, to watch a more favourable opportunity, that he might not on slight ground, or uncertainty, lay such a thing to their charge.

Fronovius, finding the priest had been repulsed, and reprov'd as well as he, and that his thoughts were the same with his, as to the suspected rival, having hush'd his present fears, and declared to him, though somewhat darkly, his own affections, &c. they went to Antonio's chamber, where they entered into a combination so hellish and malicious, that it brought many woes and miseries both to the virtuous Deidamia, and the Gardener; till by the mercy of God, to the shame and confusion of the contrivers, they were turned to blessings, to rejoice the injured, and clear their innocence, after many inexpressible sufferings.

Whilst these wicked men were thus plotting to revenge their repulses, Deidamia was thoughtful of her safety. Sometimes she determin'd to write to Alanfon, to remember his promise, and haste his return; but then she concluded, that though his presence might reform these disorders, yet to desert his command upon any private occasion would derogate from his honour; and then she considered that she could not hide from him the religion she had embraced since his departure, for she could not dissemble, if she was taxed with it; and though his company was dear to her, yet the enjoyment of the other was far

more precious and preferable: and that in comparison of the love of Christ, all the love in the world was but of little value. At another time, she thought of retiring to her parents: but this she fancied would be displeasing to her lord, that, in his absence, she should leave the government of his family, which he had trusted to her care at his departure; these things seriously weighed, she resolved to remain at home, thinking time would cure the wild disorders that were in the minds of those two wicked servants.

After this last resolve, she retired to her closet, where she had not been long before the Gardener came to present her with a paper he had drawn up, by her order, of the fundamental points of the Protestant Religion, in opposition to Popery, one being compared with the other, and tried by scripture and the fathers of the primitive times: she accepted this paper very kindly, promising to look it over at leisure, as a matter she had much desired to be informed in. Whereupon he retired to his labour in the Garden, whilst a bribed spy, their enemies, had set on the watch, was running to give information of the Gardener's being with the lady. Fronovius was out of the way; Antonio hastened as fast as he could, and softly opening the spring lock, impudently entering the chamber, drawing the curtains of her bed, in hopes of finding what he looked for there; but missing his purpose, he stole to the side of her closet, directed thither by her voice; for the pious lady was fallen on her knees, and fervently

fervently pouring out her soul to God, in these words :

O most blessed God who art the Father of mercies, and God of all consolations, I bless and praise thy holy name, that thou hast enlightened the eyes of my understanding with the knowledge of thy blessed Truth, and that thou hast delivered me from the darkness and ignorance, and those Anti-Christian errors, wherein I have lived since my childhood, and hast revealed the saving knowledge of thy will unto me, as it is contained in thy blessed word, the holy Scriptures : O strengthen my heart in the profession of thy Truth, and grant that I may never return back again to the popish idolatry and superstition, nor be under the conduct of those blind guides any more, whatever sufferings and trials I may be liable to, or may undergo on that account.

These pious breathings of her soul, Antonio to his great amazement heard, and knew not what to think, whether he should discover himself, or retire ; but at last, wickedly supposing the fear she should conceive, lest he should discover what she had uttered against the Romish religion, or that, as he concluded, she was a Hugonot, as they called Protestants, might induce her to comply with his lust, he presented himself before her, rudely opening her closet door, ere she had time to rise from her knees. This continued impudence of his much troubled her spirits ; whereupon, rising hastily, she forcibly pulled the door, after she had given him a thrust back, and locked herself

self in. However it unhappily fell out, that in this disorder, not taking that care as at another time she would have done, that paper which the Gardener had newly brought her, with her hasty shutting the door, dropped out of her coat, and unperceived by her, was shut out of the closet; which Antonio took carefully up, and put in his pocket, telling her though the door was shut against him, he had heard how she had apostatized from her religion, and how wickedly she had spoken of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, and what mischiefs he could do her if he should discover it; yet, for the love he bore her, if she would yeild to ease his passion, it should be buried in eternal oblivion: but if she refused he had now got an opportunity to ruin her.

The pious lady (whose fervent devotions this wretch had interrupted) bridled her passion, as much as human frailty could do, commanding him in mild terms to be gone, and not wound her chaste ears with his hated discourse. Against the injury he threatened her, she trusted in God for protection, who is a strong tower for the safety of all those that fly to him; and she doubted not, when she had an opportunity to make her lord sensible of it, he would, through the favour of Almighty God, concur with her, in her opinion.

Antonio, finding himself disappointed in his main expectation, and thoroughly nettled with this answer, particularly the conclusion of it, went away, threatening and muttering to himself; and in the anti-chamber met Fronovius, who upon later notice was hastening to him,

to whom he told all that he had seen and heard. This made them to consult to take new measures; and in conclusion, resolved her chastity or life should be sacrificed to their revenge. This was no sooner concluded on, but Antonio remembered that paper he had taken up, and taking it out of his pocket, knew it to be the Gardiner's hand, and at first supposing it might be a love-letter, that might discover the intrigue between him and his lady, was highly pleased; but he had scarcely read it half over, ere he found such weighty arguments against the church of Rome, levelled so directly against her tottering foundation, as not only puzzled his understanding, but made him storm at a strange rate: Whereupon Fronovius took it out of his hand, and read the rest, and in the close these words, viz. *Virtuous lady, these arguments, Pro & Contra, I submit to your great wisdom, being very joyful in having, under God, been a poor instrument in enlightening your understanding, to discern truth from falsehood.*

This left them no longer in doubt who the party was that (as they termed it) had induced her to apostatize, and become an heretic, and for this, consequently, to enjoy favours she denied to them; whereupon they vowed a bloody revenge. But fearing the love Alanson bore her, would not be effaced by the change of her religion, especially when he should come to understand their criminal passion for her, and practices against her, they resolved to make her parents bear the blame of that stupendous wickedness, which they themselves designed to be the actors of; for they
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knew that her parents were extraordinarily biggoted to the Romish church, and so were the likeliest to deal with in this matter: Whereupon Antonio immediately posted to them, and desiring a private conference with the father and mother, after many hypocritical shews of sorrow for the disgrace that would befall the family, he declared how his lady (since his lord had been absent) had been perverted from the Catholic religion, by a Hugonot, a heretic Gardener, a fugitive wretch that had been taken in some years ago upon charity. He urged what dishonour it would be to their family; the danger incurred by the king's edicts; and lastly the loss of her soul, if she was not timely recovered and brought to the right fold, from whence she had perversely strayed. Then he began to magnify the pious care and pains he had taken to keep her in the right way, and to prevent her falling into such an unpardonable a sin; but that the devil had been too hard for his industry and labours, through God's high sufferance, to bring some great judgment on her, for her haughtiness and contempt, &c.

This being delivered in a tone very moving and passionate, seeming altogether in pity to Deidamia made her father sigh, and the old lady burst out in tears, wringing their hands, and bewailing the miseries of their aged years, in this (as they then termed it) worst of misfortunes that could befall them; that the only branch of their family, that should convey it to posterity, had made herself a cast-away; for so in their passionate mood they expressed her

her to be. Antonio was glad to see them thus wrought upon; and the storm of their first grief spending itself, and being allayed by falling tears, they began to consult more maturely how this misfortune might be reversed; and after many things were debated, Antonio's advice of lodging her in a nunnery (where she might be restrained from heretic books as he said, and the company of any seducers, and also be instructed by virtuous nuns, till her lord came home, and determined what might farther be done in it) was approved.

What was to be done with the Gardener was the thing to be consulted, whether to take him away secretly or deliver him up to justice; the priest was for the former, but the parents' consciences were tender in that, and could not consent to such wickedness; but Antonio alledged, that the whole business would be made public if he was delivered up to justice, and their daughter would be brought in as criminal, and perhaps for her obstinacy, her lord might lose his honours and preferments at court. This made them consider farther, and at last leave it to the wicked priest, or those he should appoint, to do as he or they pleased. They would have born him company to Alanfon's house, to see what their persuasions might do, but he urged, it would only be a means to discover the matter; and that it would be the best for them to come and moderate things when the count came home; of which he would give them the first notice, since at present what was to be done

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required secrecy, that in the mean time she should be provided for, as became her quality ; and that such a place as he mentioned, with time and company, were the best cure to jostle these wild notions out of her head : Upon which they only sent her a letter, and resolved not to go themselves. So Antonio returned well satisfied to his wicked companion.

Deidamia (who was ignorant of this) missing her paper, and not doubting which way it went, taking more care for Bernard the Gardener than herself, thought by it he would be discovered ; wherefore she sent for him, gave him a handful of Gold, and commanded him to shift for himself ; telling him what had passed, and the danger he was in. This command he seemed exceeding loth to obey, and with tears in his eyes, protested, that for the sake of his religion, and in her defence against any injury or violence, he was willing to expose his life ; but she urged so many things to hasten his departure, that he promised to do it ; and so they (with shedding many tears) took a long farewell of each other.

Bernard was preparing to depart, as Antonio returned with his orders ; whereupon Fronovius clapped him up in a dungeon, and that night hired too ruffians to carry him to the sea-cliffs, and throw him thence headlong ; and thither they carried him in a sack, on a horse, gagged and bound ; but finding a vessel thrust into a creek very near the cliffs, one of them enquired, and found it belonged to a French plantation in the West-Indies ; whereupon they took the method of Joseph's brethren

brethern with the Ishmaelites, to make the best purchase of him, rather than destroy him and lose it; so he that came to enquire demanded of the master, "If he wanted a lusty servant?" He told him "Yes;" then he returned and took the Gardener out of the sack, ungagged and unbound him, and told him that though he deserved to die for perverting his lady to heresy, yet they had compassion upon him, and would only send him to do penance for a slave in the West-Indies, and bid him accept of it thankfully, without muttering; and thereupon delivered him to the master of the vessel, of whom they received twelve crowns. After which they returned, and gave an account how they had thrown him, with a great stone about his neck, from a fifty foot cliff into the sea, and for it received the reward promised them. Nor was Bernard unwilling to go with his new master, finding Providence changed the death that was designed him, only into slavery, from whence he might hope in time to be released. But his care was greater for Deidamia than himself, for he had been used to misfortunes, and inured to several hardships. And her grief was no less, that she found herself constrained (as she supposed for his safety) so abruptly to part with the man that had been an instrument in the filling her heart so full of heavenly consolations; and had not laid her commands on him to write to her, or otherwise to give her secret notice of his abiding place (that she might have had farther converse with him, and been more strengthened by him in the profession of that

truth he had instructed her in, and which she was resolved to abide by) till she found means to restore him to his place again.

Whilst she was pensive on these thoughts, Antonio having (as I before told you) gotten a letter from her parents to her, wherein they laid their commands on her till her lord's return, *as she tendered the favour of Almighty God, their blessing, and her own honour and safety, to be ruled and guided in all things by her Spiritual Pastor* (so being ignorant of his villainy, they termed this wicked priest,) *and whatever he persuaded her to for the good of her soul, and bodily preservation, readily to comply with; to whose care and integrity, next to the heavenly protection, they heartily recommended till her lord and husband came home:* This was signed by both of them. And Antonio having consulted Fronovius about it, they both came boldly to her apartment, when they knew she was in private, and presented it to her, *charging her to obey it as she tendered her safety:* she no sooner looked on it, but she asked them so many questions, that by Antonio's replies, she was not insensible they had traduced her to her parents; and after some just reproaches told them, it should not be long before she would go and plead her own cause, and doubted not so to justify her proceedings to her parents, that the black villainy of her base and treacherous accusers should be unable to fully the brightness of her innocence. This at first startled them; but being fully resolved to proceed in their wicked designs, they plainly told her, she was at their disposal, and that
they

they had orders to carry her to a nunnery, where she should be honourably used, but debarred from the destructive principles she had imbibed, till her and their lord returned to take the matter into his own hands, and determine how he pleased to dispose of her.

This insufferable impudence of these lustful wretches, stirred up her zeal to so much holy anger and detestation of what they proposed, that she in a great passion protested "To die a thousand deaths, if it were possible, and by the most exquisite torments their hellish malice could invent, rather than to be inclosed within the walls of a nunnery, which she was satisfied was no other than a sink of sin, and plausible colour for lewdness and debauchery." But they without replying, offering to force her from the closet, she opposed her strength against their rudeness, crying out for help to the rest of her servants; but Fronovius, steward of the family, so ordered the matter, that those who immediately waited upon her, were then out of hearing: so that without any other interruption than what her contending gave them, they hurried her into a close chamber in the remotest part of the house, where they locked her in and went to consult farther, how they should secretly convey her from thence, whilst she (who expected, after such treatment, nothing but a violation of her chastity, would much rather have embraced death, and counted it a favour) was pouring out her soul to God, and imploring his help in this her needful time of trouble, and begging
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of him to strengthen her faith, till on a sudden, to allay the trouble and afflictions of her mind, such beams of joy and comfort darted into her soul, that she assured herself, That that merciful God, whose gracious protection she had been seeking, would work out deliverance for her in due time.

These conspirators by this time had come to a result to rid themselves, as they thought, for ever from the fears they were in of their villainous practices being discovered; which was this:—

Fronovius counterfeiting a letter in Alanfon's hand so very exactly, that if himself had seen it, he might have been puzzled to distinguish it from his own; and having gotten two ruffians ready, one dressed in the habit of an officer, and the other like a servant attending him, Antonio and his companion in wickedness, went to her with it; and falling on their knees, with some forced tears, humbly implored her pardon for the indignities they had offered to her, beseeching her to be their good lady notwithstanding their follies, and they would never in the like nature offend, nor do any thing to disoblige her; with many other protestations, and much feigned sorrow for their rudeness and designs upon her chastity, intreating her not to discover it to her lord.

Whilst Deidamia was wondering what that sudden alteration, in those who had lately so rudely treated her, might mean, Fronovius delivered her the letter, in which she read these words:

My

My dearest Deidamia,

THO' I know, that the news which these lines will acquaint you with, cannot be acceptable to you, yet conjure you by our mutual affections, that you suffer not yourself to be disturbed, but hear what I shall tell you with that patience and serenity of mind which becomes you, as knowing it our duty in all things that happen to us, to submit to the divine will. Know then, my lovely Deidamia, that in a late encounter with a party of the enemies, I happened to be wounded by a chance shot, which my surgeon tells me is mortal; and fearing that it may be so, and desiring above all things here below, to have a sight of your dear self before I depart out of the world, I have sent the bearer Mons. Durell, one of my captains, to conduct you to me forthwith; who is a person of that worth and honour, that you may trust yourself with him, without the trouble of any attendants but what he brings with him, because I would have you come as speedily as may be; which is at present all from him, who is both in life and death,

Charleroy,
July 12, 1639.

Your ever faithful husband,
DE ALANSON.

At the reading of this she trembled, looked pale, and shed abundance of tears, being in the greatest disorder and confusion imaginable: intreating instantly to see the party that brought it; promising (on their renewing their intreaties) not to discover their wickedness, if by their future demeanor they made an amendment for what had passed; and they

they thereupon solemnly promised it, led her down into the hall, where the pretended captain and his servant bowed very low to her; and being before-hand instructed, answered all her questions so cunningly, that she verily believed the letter to come from her lord, and that all he said was true, desiring them to refresh themselves, whilst she fitted herself with other apparel, and took some Jewels, Gold, &c. along with her. Which done, and being about four in the evening, the innocent dove committing herself into the talons of these bloody vultures, mounted behind the supposed captain, who had his instructions not to let her see the next morning dawn. Antonio and Fronovius pretended much sorrow at her departure, but inwardly rejoiced, that by this stratagem they could get her easily into the trap, without noise and disturbance; which had they gone about to do by force, her cries might have brought rescue, and prevented their villainous purposes; the cursed priest indeed, would have first ravished her by himself and his companion, and then murdered her at home; but the other, considering that it would be difficult to dispose of the dead body, contrived this way. But I must leave them for some time hugging themselves in their security, and follow the deceived innocent.

The bloody cut-throats having got the prize by her too much credulity, into their possession, took all the by-ways they could, crossing the country, and holding her in discourse with many things relating to the war,
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and so spun out the time till the sun was near setting, when coming into a valley between two vast woods, in a place much unfrequented, they rode into one of them, at a turning of a narrow way, where the supposed captain stopped, and the ruffian that rode single alighted, and most surprizingly pulled Deidamia from behind him, who at so unsuspected a rudeness trembled, and began to suspect the treachery; nor was the other slow in dismounting, when both together carried her farther into the wood; upon this, with piteous shrieks and cries, she demanded the cause of such violence; but without replying, the villain who had carried her, drawing his sword, directed it for the fatal thrust, designing instantly to pierce her heart; whilst on her knees she was imploring their pity and compassion, and intreating to know in what she had offended, to make them so void of humanity towards a distressed lady, whom they had betrayed into that solitary place, being convinced that her lord had given no such commands: No, replied they, that's true, nor do we know him, but Antonio and Fronovius have, and we must obey them; besides, you are an Heretick, and ought not to live.

Deidamia now finding she was betrayed by her wicked servants, into the hands of these merciless villains; and seeing nothing but present death before her eyes, she poured out her soul to God in vehement petitions for favour from his hands, and that if he saw fit she should live no longer here, that he would receive her into life eternal; and that rather

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if it were required, she might seal her profession of the reformed religion, in which she had found so much heavenly consolation, with her dearest blood, than be prevailed with to recant it. But thou, O Lord, said she, who deliveredst Daniel from the fury of the Lions, and the three children from devouring flames, can'st, if thou wilt in this great extremity, deliver me from these blood-thirsty men, whom I have in no manner injured: But be it as thou pleasest, so that my departing soul, when it leaves this mortal body, may find shelter in the arms of thy mercy. The villains, who all this while had eyed her, and saw her lovely in her tears, troubled not themselves about her religion, for their business was to murder her; and therefore the pretended captain said, *Lady, our time is short, this instant you must die; therefore settle your mind for the fatal stroke.* To this she made no reply, but continuing on her knees, with eyes up lifted to heaven, sighs and tears being the language of her soul, his impious hand was about to give the fatal thrust, but the other caught hold of his arm, and stopt his sword; and after that they whispered; but she knew not what they said, till their farther attempt revealed it.

They had no sooner done conferring notes, but they violently forced her on her back, and prepared to ravish her first, and then put her to death: her cries were upon this redoubled, and she begged death rather than the loss of her chastity, opening her bosom, and tempting their swords to pierce it. But her beauty in
this

this sorrowful condition, was so charming in their lustful eyes, that they were inexorable to her cries and prayers. O had Alanfon been but there, with what vengeance, at this piteous sight, would his sword have been drawn to their destruction, and her rescue! But he being ignorant of the wounds his dear lady was about to receive, Heaven interposed for her rescue; For the villains fell at discord, who should first enjoy her; and the contest grew so hot, that they disputed it with their swords; and in the duel, the pretended captain (most forward in the mischief) was run through the body, and with a ghastly groan yielded up his wicked soul into the hands of death. The other being sorely wounded, and fainting through loss of blood, gave Deidamia time to fly farther into the woods, wandering so far, that night covering every thing with darkness, she thought she might now rest a little to recover breath; and so sat down upon the Ground: Though the dangers she had so lately escaped from wicked men, and those that she now feared from wild beasts, would not a long time suffered her to close her eyes; however, she ceased not with earnest prayers and supplications, to recommend herself to God, and implore his aid and protection; who by the late wonderful deliverance he had given her, had sufficiently shewn her how able he is to save to the utmost, even in the midst of the greatest dangers. The consideration whereof was a mighty allay to her present sorrows, in the midst of that forlorn condition to which she was reduced; so that a little sup-

ported thereby, she at last fell into a sound sleep, having no other pillow than a turf of grass, nor covering than the canopy of Heaven. The morning being come, Deidamia again returned thanks to God, both for her late deliverance, and last night's preservation; earnestly begging of him, That as he had graciously begun to deliver her, so he would in his own good time complete it, to his own Glory and her Good; and that, though at present her afflictions are not Joyous but Grievous, yet through God's over-ruling Providence, they might afterwards bring forth for her the peaceable fruits of righteousness; humbly desiring she might be kept from harbouring hard thoughts of God or of his truth and ways, which she had so lately embraced, notwithstanding any sufferings she had or might meet withal on that account. And having thus recommended herself to God, she resolved, if it were possible, to get out of that desolate, pathless and solitary place: But the more she thought to extricate herself, the more she found herself entangled, and without hopes of getting out. The fruits, that at that time of the year grew upon trees, supplied her with food: and the little purling streams that issued from some springs in the wood, supplied her with drink; so that finding it impossible to get away, she was content to tarry there, till the providence of God should find out some way of deliverance for her; being satisfied in this, that the comforts of conversation, and other conveniences that she used to have, were abundantly made up in the communion she enjoyed with God, whose blessed presence

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(as she has since confessed) did more than recompense for all her outward wants.—In the possession of which happiness we will leave her for a time, and look back to see what became of the surviving ruffian.

His companion (as we have already heard) was killed in their contest, about which should enjoy, or rather ravish Deidamia first, and he that survived fainted away through loss of blood, which (as we have already related) made way for Deidamia's escape: but he recovering in some little time, found means to stop its effusion; and then missing of Deidamia, he made what search he could for her, not so much to satisfy his lust, (which his loss of blood had pretty much allayed) as to take away her life, that in time to come she might not be an evidence of his wickedness; but not finding her after all his search, he buried his companion, and returned to those that had set them to work, telling them, *That Deidamia, when she found that she must die, by a surprize, had snatched away his companion's sword, and slain him with it by an unlook'd-for thrust; but that himself had quickly revenged it by her own death, and had buried them both in a deep pit to avoid discovery.* This they believed, and gave him what they had promised, being mightily pleased that now they were, as they thought at least, out of danger.

Whilst these things were thus acted, Deidamia's parents were exceedingly troubled, even to that degree, that their sleep departed from them; and those little slumbers that they sometimes got, were interrupted with strange and unaccountable

unaccountable dreams, which were also attended with an unusual melancholy, of which they could give no account. This made them resolve to enquire after Deidamia, of whom they had heard nothing since the permission they gave to Antonio, to carry her to a nunnery.

But Fronovius and Antonio had been so cunning to prevent their discovery of the villainy, that for a sum of money they engaged a certain Abbess of Antonio's acquaintance, to acknowledge when there should be occasion, that Deidamia had been brought thither, but that she had made her escape from thence, so that she knew not what was become of her, nor could give any account of the reason of it, but only by a note that she had left behind in her chamber; which note Fronovius, who, as we have already said, had a notable faculty at counterfeiting of hands, had writ in a hand so like Deidamia's, that it could not be distinguished. They had also given the Abbess a ladder of ropes, by which it was pretended, she made her escape. Fronovius and Antonio having so well laid their design with the Abbess, kept possession of Alanson's house without fear or controul. And therefore when Deidamia's parents came thither to enquire after their daughter, they received them with much seeming courtesy and kindness; and Fronovius told them, "that though it had unhappily fallen out, that their lady had been perverted to heresy since the departure of the Count her husband, yet he had taken that care of the family in his Lord's absence, which
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was consistent with duty ; and that, as to his lady, the orders they had been pleased to give to Antonio, to send her to a nunnery, had been punctually observed, and he hoped by that means, against the coming home of their lord, she might again be reconciled unto her mother church, out of which there is no salvation." Though this discourse of Fronovius was very plausible, yet the parents of Deidamia were not at all satisfied with it, but desired to see and discourse with her in the nunnery where she was ; which Fronovius seemed ready to assent to, and with Antonio offered their service to accompany them thither, telling them they had given strict charge to the Abbess, to prevent any hereticks from coming to her, that none might be permitted to speak with her but themselves, or by their immediate order.

The parents, being for the present satisfied with this answer, lay there that night, big with hopes they had of seeing their daughter the next day : which being come, they went with Fronovius and Antonio to the nunnery, but were extremely surprized, when they came thither, to hear the Abbess say, that the young lady had been too hard for her, and notwithstanding all her care and diligence, had found a way to make her escape but the day before ; and then led them into the Garden, shewing them the ladder of ropes by which she got over the wall ; and then taking them into a room that she called her chamber, gave them the note which Fronovius left with her, asking her parents if they knew that hand ; they

they hastily opened it, and thought verily it had been of Deidamia's writing: and then reading it, found it to contain these words:

HAVING been forced to this place against my mind and conscience, let none be troubled, that I have found a means to set myself at liberty, and am gone to him, who, no doubt, will right me of the injury done me by my treacherous servants.

DEIDAMIA.

Her parents, upon reading this letter, believing it to be true, burst forth into tears for the loss of their daughter, not knowing now in what part of the country to seek for her; the only hope they had was that she was gone into Flanders to her husband, to which opinion Fronovius and Antonio both persuaded them, from that expression in the note, *I am gone to him who will right my injuries.* Upon which, giving Fronovius a charge to be a faithful servant in his lord's absence, they returned to their own house, where they writ the following letter to the Count, and sent it by an express to Flanders:

To the Count De ALANSON, Colonel of the
Regiment of PICARDY.

DEAREST SON,

IT is not without inexpressible grief that we write these lines, which bring you the sad tidings of the greatest affliction that ever befell you; and which, without the divine aid, you will find it very hard to bear; but I hope heaven will support
you

you under it; it is in brief, the loss of *Deidamia*,—I do not mean by death, for if heaven had ordained it so, that would have been far more eligible: but alas! she is lost both to herself and all of us; and she is, since your departure, perverted to *Herefy*, and turned an obstinate *Hugonot*; which whilst we endeavoured to reclaim her from, by consenting, upon the advice of your Chaplain, *Father Antonio*, that she should be put into a nunnery, she escaped from thence no one knows whither; the thought thereof has filled the hearts of myself and wife with such inexpressible grief and sorrow, as hath rendered us altogether inconsolable; our only remaining hope is, that she may be gone to you; and that, if you have not already, you may yet hear of her in a few days, for she left behind her in her chamber, at the nunnery of *St. Bridget's*, whither *Fronovius* and *Antonio* conducted her, the following note:

HAVING been forced to this place against my mind and conscience, let none be troubled, that I have found a means to set myself at liberty, and am gone to him, who, no doubt, will right me of the injury done me by my treacherous servants.

DEIDAMIA.

It is this note alone that gives us ground to hope that you may see her again; and I pray God it may fall out accordingly. And whenever this lost sheep shall be found again, I doubt not but you will lay her in your bosom, according to the example of our Great Shepherd, and by your wonted love and tenderness towards her, endeavour to restore her

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again

again to the true fold and church of Christ; to whose holy protection I commit you, and so farewell.

J. MONTAIGN.

The count Alanfon was so transported with Grief at the reading of this letter, that for some time he remained speechless. His trouble was too great to vent itself in words, still waters being always the deepest: But soon after, his sorrow gave itself vent, in the most passionate and feeling complaints; and then calling for pen and ink, he writ the following letter to to his father:

Alanfon to Sieur Montaign.

S I R,

I received your letter, the contents whereof have brought that Grief and Sorrow to my Heart that will continue there for ever, unless the sight of my dearest Deidamia removes it: Her being turned Hugonot is not that which gives me much trouble, it rather makes me think there is something of Good in those opinions, or else so much Goodness and Virtue as that of Deidamia's, could never embrace them. Had you but let her alone in my house, I had been happy still; but your endeavouring to reclaim her, has been the ruin of us both; I am so transported with Grief and Anger, that I know not what to write, nor would I write at all, but come away immediately; were it not for the hopes you give me from the note found in the chamber of my dearest Deidamia, that she was gone to
him

him that would soon right her injuries, and that can be none but myself; might I but recover her again, she should not be mistaken in her thoughts. 'Tis in hopes of her coming, that I am content to stay here a little longer: for it's Deidamia alone can make me happy. Farewel.

ALANSON.

The messenger being returned with Alan-son's letter, it administered fresh Grief to Deidamia's parents, for they thereby found, that by their too easily yielding to Antonio's designs, they had not only lost their daughter, but the affections of their son-in-law. In this state we will now leave them, and make Deidamia a visit in her sorrowful solitude.

Deidamia, being in that lonely place, each day removed her habitation, until at last she found a cave to secure herself from the injuries of the weather; and it was a quiet resting-place to her in the night-season, for by shutting up the mouth of the cave, she covered herself from all danger; which she looked upon, and thanked God for, as a great mercy: and living upon the fruits that grew in the wood, (as I said before) she spent her time wholly in prayer and meditation; and thought her diet and lodging was extremely changed, yet her health was both continued and increased, and she found that promise made good unto her, *As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.*

She had now lived almost four months in this solitude, and winter approaching, began to make the woods uncomfortable, and the

cold extremely nipping : So that Deidamia was forced often to walk apace to get her a heat. One day, as she walked farther than ordinary, she discovered some kind of an obscure path she had not seen before, and tho' she knew not whither it would lead her, she was resolved to follow the track : She travelled so far that day, that it was in vain for her to think of returning to her beloved cave, where she had lain so many nights ; and therefore making the best shift that she could, she sat down upon the Ground, and recommending herself to the Almighty's protection, composed herself to rest : the next morning she arose before it was light, and travelling forward, perceived her path to be like that of the Just, which the wise man tells us, *shines more and more unto the perfect day* : And she was encouraged to go on, because she fancied she heard the barking of dogs : and after travelling a little farther, she was well assured it was a real thing, and not a fancy only ; and therefore she pursued her journey the more eagerly : The sun had not come to its meridian, when she heard an unusual rushing amongst the bushes, and standing still to know what it might mean, she perceived a grave old man, with two dogs following him, come from among the trees. They were both alike surprized at the interview ; for the old man, having never seen any human creature in that place before, could not but be amazed to see a woman coming from the midst of the wood ; and therefore addressing himself to her, he enquired by what misfortune she came thither ?

thither? Intreating her not to be afraid, for she should receive no harm from him: Deidamia, upon this, looking earnestly upon him, and perceiving his carriage and demeanor to be what became the Gravity of his years, she told him "she was indeed in a wild place, and knew not the way out again." To this the old man replied, "If she would go with him to his homely cottage, his wife would conduct her out of the wood." Deidamia presently accepted of his kindness, and went with him. And after they had gone about the space of a mile, they came to his house, where the good old woman (who was somewhat surprised to see her husband bring a stranger along with him) rose up and received her very courteously, desiring her to sit down, and refresh herself with such homely fare as their cottage afforded: Which she did, and then asked her farther how she came into that place. Deidamia desired they would ask her no questions, for the repetition of her sorrow would but renew her Grief; only thus much she would let them know, that her being there alive was the effect of God's providence, in delivering her from wicked and blood-thirsty men, that sought to take away her life. Upon which, perceiving her to be full of Grief, they asked her no more questions, but finding her very weary, they led her into a homely but clean apartment, to repose herself upon the bed. Deidamia was mighty thoughtful what this aged couple might be; and whether or no for her apparel's sake, and that Gold, and those Jewels she had about her, she might not fall
into

into as great a danger as that she had formerly escaped; and though she was at first glad of their company, she could have wished herself in her beloved cave again. But her fears were quickly over, when by a French Bible, and other good books she found in her room, and by the hearty prayers of the good old man at night, she perceived they were Hugonots, who had flown into that solitary retirement for the sake of their religion: this made her be much more free with them, blessing God for his providence in bringing her thither, and resolving to continue there, till she could meet with an opportunity to return home, into the arms of her dearest Alanfon; and the old couple having understood her history more fully, by their pity and commiseration, made her abode with them more easy, and the communion she had with them in the things of another world, weaned her from this in a great measure. So that here she took up her abode and continued with them, not only that winter, but the year following, until she was found out by her beloved Alanfon; to whom it is time that we now return.

The Count Alanfon having tarried at the camp a whole month, after the receiving of his father-in-law's letter, in expectation of seeing his dearest Deidamia, began now to be impatient of tarrying any longer; and indeed, during all that time, he was so much changed in his carriage, humours, and conversation, that all those with whom he used to converse in the camp, took notice of it, he having abandoned himself to an extreme melancholy; therefore

therefore desiring of the king to go home, both for the recovery of his health, and for the settling some affairs in his family, he soon obtained it, and soon after, though with a heavy heart, arrived there; where his first business was to enquire after Deidamia, but none of the servants could give any account of her, but Fronovius and Antonio, who gave him the same account that had been sent him by his father-in-law: to which he sternly asked them, How they durst dispose of their lady and mistress, contrary to her will, without his consent or knowledge? Telling them, he feared, by the note she had written, it was their treachery that was the occasion of her loss; which if he could but be confirmed in, he would take care they should receive a punishment suitable to the Greatness of their Crimes. At which Fronovius and Antonio began to tremble, and make the best excuses for themselves they could, alledging the consent of her parents for what they did. But that did not at all satisfy Alanson, who soon discharged them from his service, and resolved to travel in search of Deidamia, though he knew not which way to bend his course: but after many a tedious journey, enquiring among those who were favourers of the Hugonots, he could hear no tidings of her; so full of Grief and Sorrow, he mourned like a turtle that had lost his mate, though his friends, by all means possible, endeavoured to comfort him; persuading him to ease his Grief, for that it was probable Deidamia, by some misfortune or other was dead; and therefore they advised him to
think

think of a second marriage, as that which would restore his former gaiety, and make him forget Deidamia. But the more they endeavoured to persuade him, the more he was resolved to the contrary; and therefore, to avoid their continued importunities, he fixed his resolution once more to travel in quest of her; which accordingly he did, but without success; and therefore he resolved to return again to his own house, and there spend the remainder of his days in solitude.—But as he was returning home, in his way, he met with a vast concourse of people, and demanding the occasion of it, he was told a criminal was going to be broken on the wheel, for a murder he had committed; upon which, curiosity led him to see the execution: and getting pretty near, the malefactor cast his eyes upon him, and straightway knew him to be Alanfon, the husband of Deidamia; and being smitten with remorse of conscience, he beckoned to Alanfon to come near, and humbly begged his pardon for the wrong he had done him. On this, Alanfon both stared and fell a trembling, fearing it was for her murder the criminal was to die: but coming nearer, the malefactor asked him if he had heard any news of his lady? and then in tears confessed, that himself and another had been hired to murder her, to which end they carried her into a wood, (which he named to him) but by a miraculous providence she escaped out of their hands; that afterwards he had reported to those that set him to work, that he had actually murdered her, for which he received the reward, but
which

which way she escaped he knew not ; and that this was about two years since. The Count urged him to tell the names of those that had so hired him ; but he said, he had sworn upon the holy sacrament of the altar never to disclose them, and that he feared damnation if he should : only, said he, this I may say, without breaking my oath, they were two persons in whom you have put a great deal of confidence. And then solemnly attested, that what he said was the truth, and soon after was executed.

This dying criminal's confession confirmed Alanfon, that Deidamia had been treacherously carried thither, either from his house or the nunnery ; and he no longer doubted that Fronovius and Antonio were the persons, that had hired the villains to murder her : and therefore, though they had been removed from his service some time, yet he was resolved to pursue them, in order to bring them to justice : but first he intended to make a fresh search after Deidamia, the criminal having given him an account where she escaped from them ; and therefore he thought (if she was still alive) she might be somewhere in the vicinity of that wood. Towards that, therefore, he bended his course ; and being arrived in sight thereof, and seeing how vast a place it was, he perceived it would be a difficult thing to find her, even though she was there : yet, at his entering in, he conceived some hopes in his mind, that he should not lose his labour. Whereupon, alighting and giving his horse to his servant, (who had attended him in all his melancholy travels) and charging him to attend there till he came back, he went into the

wood alone, and found himself entangled amongst thickets, briars, and bushes; yet still he went on, searching every cave and solitary place, often calling out Deidamia, till darkness coming on, made him think of returning to his man; but he found he was gone too far to retreat back in time, and therefore resolved to go forward: and being, no doubt, guided by Providence, he happened upon that cave where Deidamia had so often bewailed his absence, and mourned her own solitary state; and there he rested his weary and tired body for that night, resolving to pursue his search the next morning; which being come, just as he was going out of the cave, he perceived something sparkle on the Ground, which he stooped and took up; and looking on it in the open light, he found it to be a locket of diamonds, which he had formerly given Deidamia; and she unwittingly had dropt there. The finding of this filled him with transports of joy, as looking upon it to be an earnest of his good success in finding the owner: thereupon he often repeated her name very loud, but could receive no answer but by some broken echoes; and therefore, going on he knew not whither, but being directed by the same Providence, that had before conducted her to the cave, when he had wandered so far that he was almost hopeless, he was suddenly set upon by two wiffling curs, which, upon offering to draw his sword, ran away barking from him; which he pursuing, came in a little time to a path, where he might discern the foot-steps of human creatures, which very
much

much revived his hopes, and encouraged him still to go on. He had not gone far before he discerned smoke to issue from a small cottage, to which as he approached pretty near; he was again saluted by the furious barking of those dogs, whom he had before pursued. This was the cottage where Deidamia resided, who upon the barking of the dogs, looking out to see what was the matter, espied Alanfon coming towards her, and (the idea of his image being continually in her breast) she no sooner saw but knew him, and running into his arms in an excess of joy, was only able to cry out, *Ah! my dear Lord Alanfon*; but excess of joy, proves sometimes fatal, and it had like to have done so to Deidamia, for she immediately swooned away in his arms: The dogs still continued their barking, which also caused the good old woman of the cottage to see what the cause was. She was extremely surprised to see a genteel stranger there, and Deidamia fainting in his arms; however she made what haste she could to endeavour her recovery, desiring Alanfon to bring her into the house; which he accordingly did, telling the good old woman that he was Deidamia's husband, which she (being very well acquainted with Deidamia's story) was very glad to hear. It was a considerable time before Deidamia could be brought to herself. But, his lady being again recovered, Alanfon, with a thousand kisses and endearing expressions, assured her of the truth, reality, and constancy of his affections towards her, whilst she on the other hand, seemed to be the most satisfied

creature in the world, in that she had once more seen her dearest lord Alanfon; defiring him not to be troubled at her fainting away, fince it was only occafioned by the excefs of joy ſhe conceived in ſeeing him again; and that death itſelf would have been eaſy to her upon ſo happy an occaſion, and eſpecially dying in his arms.

Whilſt in this manner they were expreſſing the ardency of their affections to each other, the good man of the houſe came home, and being told by his wife that Deidamia's huſband was there, he was overjoyed; and courteouſly ſaluted Alanfon, telling him, he was ſure he was a welcome man there to them all, but eſpecially to Deidamia, who had long mourned his abſence. Alanfon kindly thanked him, and told him, he ſhould ever honour him as the refuge and preſerver of his dear lady. And after ſuch civilities on each ſide paſſed, the good woman ſet before him ſuch homely refreshment, as ſhe had prepared, on the table: Alanfon eat but little, Deidamia's perſence being more to him than all the dainties in the world; yet perceiving with what coarſe fare his lady had been there contented, he praiſed her humility, and wondered at her virtue. Dinner being ended, Alanfon was concerned for his ſervant, whom he had left in the entrance of the wood, and would have gone back to him; but the good old man would by no means let him, telling him he would go himſelf, becauſe he better knew the way, and could more eaſily find it: and ſo taking his dogs along with him, he went accordingly: e

cordingly: the man having waited at the entrance of the wood, from the time that his master went into it, till the next morning, and hearing nothing of him, leaving his horses in the fields adjoining to the wood, resolved to find him out; and having got a good way, he met the old Gentleman, who was coming to him; and enquiring of him for his master, whom he described; he told him he had both seen, and was come from him, to conduct him to where he was, and that he had found his lady; at this the servant was very glad, and joyfully went along with him. Soon as the old Gentleman was gone for the servant, the Count and his Lady went into the woods, and there she gave him a particular account of all her sorrows and sufferings, since his departing from her, and the reason of her staying where she was, viz. The old Gentleman not daring to go out of the wood with her, he being a proscribed person; and to go without him was to endanger her own life; besides she knew not how Antonio might have ordered matters, having the pretence of heresy to lay to her charge; and that hearing nothing of him in all this time, she thought his affections might have been estranged from her. But Alanfon assured her to the contrary, telling her, he could not but wonder at the unparalleled villainy of Fronovius and Antonio, and that he had turned them out of his service soon after he came home from the camp. After which, the old Gentleman and Alanfon's servant, being (as before related) arrived at the cottage,

cottage, the evening was far spent, and so they all betook themselves to rest.

The next morning, Alanfon was preparing for his return home: but before they went, their aged landlord would need have them stay and dine, and in discourse, told him, he was once a tenant of his father's; but by cruel edicts, was forced not only to leave that farm, but his paternal inheritance; suffering the spoils and loss of all, for the sake of Christ and a good conscience; and in this solitary retirement, had enjoyed more true peace and satisfaction, than in all the pleasure of his forepast life. The Count then asked him his name, which he told him was De la Mont; upon which he presently knew and embraced him, saying, *That though himself was of the Romish persuasion, yet he had often pitied his sufferings; adding, that it was given out he died in prison.* The pious Deidamia, from this discourse, took an occasion to say, *Ah! my dearest lord, you see what a cruel and merciless religion it is that you profess, and which, through the goodness of God, I have lately departed from. I am not surprized,* said Alanfon, *at that which you say, for I was informed in Flanders, that you had changed your religion. I wish to God,* replied Deidamia, *that yourself, my dearest Lord, was likewise made a partaker of the same happy change.* Upon this Mons. De la Mont put in, and laid down such weighty reasons for the truth of the reformed religion, and against the errors of the church of Rome, that it encouraged Deidamia farther to go on, and shew the viscioufness and debauchery of the Romish

mish clergy, their bloody principles, and persecuting spirit; so that Alanfon was forced to confess, that what was alledged against their practices was true, but as to their principals (abating that of persecution) he believed they might be mistaken; upon which Deidamia replied, *I am glad, my dear Lord, to find you are against persecution; I hope then you will be willing I shall enjoy the liberty of my conscience, the only happiness I have enjoyed in this solitary retirement; and that you will never go about to compel me to go to mass, which I would rather die than do.* To this Alanfon replied, that he was no such bigot as to think, that those that sincerely worshipped God, according to the best of their understanding, (as he was sure Deidamia did) might not be accepted of him, though of an opinion different from himself; and as to compel her to go to mass, if by arguments he could not persuade her to it, he solemnly promised he never would use any other means.

And being now ready to depart, Alanfon offered La Mont store of Gold for their kindness to his lady, while she had been with them, which he absolutely refused, saying, her conversation had been so agreeable, that they were the persons who had been obliged. So that leave being taken, and La Mont praying that God would go along with them, and make their way prosperous, they parted, and coming out of the wood, the servant readily found the horses; and Deidamia getting up behind her lord, they made the best of their way towards Alanfon's house, where they were received with the rejoicing of their acquaintance, and much
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more of her parents, to whom in a day or two they made a visit, Deidamia being received by them as one risen from the dead. And the story of their daughter's troubles being related to them, they could not but admire the Goodness of God in preserving her, and wondered at the monstrous wickedness of Fronovius and Antonio, who, upon their hearing of the confession of the dying criminal, had withdrawn themselves from their former residences.— Antonio (the better to escape deserved punishment for his lustful attempts upon Deidamia's chastity) went privately to the bishop of Rheims, and told him that Count Alanfon's lady was depraved with heresy, in which she was so much countenanced by her lord, that himself, for endeavouring to reclaim her, was turned out of the family, and cut off from all interest in it, and therefore came humbly to beg his protection against so powerful an adversary, since what he had done, was only out of zeal to promote the catholic religion. The bishop received him into his protection, and writ a sharp letter to the Count about it; who having received it, believed it was done by the instigation of Antonio, whom he heard he had entertained; and being troubled that so great a villain should find any countenance from the bishop, he writ back again to know the names of those, that had so injuriously informed him against his lady; but the bishop would not gratify him so far in his desires. This made the Count return him a second letter, written in a more angry stile, declaring that if he could not have justice from him, the
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the king himself should be acquainted with it, and by him he would seek redress. This so nettled the bishop, that he sent examiners to his lady, to interrogate her about her religion, of which the Count having some intimation, sent her to her parents, who were extremely troubled at these fresh misfortunes, and mightily scandalized at the villainy of Antonio, and the bishop's protecting him from justice, grew thereupon very cold in the profession of the Popish religion, which so furiously persecuted innocence and virtue, and countenanced the greatest wickedness; this the pious Deidamia wisely improved, and so effectually wrought upon them, by her warm and zealous discourses, that through the operation of God's holy spirit assisting her, they were both brought over to the embracing of the truth.

The bishop's examiners being disappointed, returned back without their errand; upon which the bishop threatened to excommunicate both Alanfon and his family; and was soon after as good as his word. Upon this Alanfon posts away to the king, who was then at Marly, where he complained of the injury done him by the bishop of Rheims, both in excommunicating him, and protecting a villainous criminal from justice. But it seems the bishop had been before-hand with him, and made his complaint first. For the king received him very coldly, and told him, the bishop of Rheims was a good man, and he left his business wholly to him. On which Alanfon returned home much discontented, and found that in his absence fresh

search had been made diligently for his lady, though without success. Then he went to the bishop himself, and boldly charged him with entertaining a wicked person, to the prejudice of his honour, telling him who he was, and declared his crimes, desiring he might be brought forth, and his lady should appear. But the bishop refusing this, and telling him his lady was accused of heresy, and he of countenancing it; the count in a kind of holy anger, told him, "that religion could not be of God, which encouraged villainy, and sought the destruction of them that were virtuous." At this the bishop stormed and told him, *That he should be answered in another manner.* And soon after he had secret notice from court, "That upon a fresh complaint of the bishop's, both he and his lady were proscribed as Hugonots; and that notwithstanding his friends intercessions, and his own former merits, his places were taken away, and his estate ordered to be seized, as a terror to others." Alanfon finding himself unable to withstand this storm, packed up the richest of his effects, and privately sent them to his wife's father, where she was all this while concealed, and then followed after himself. Where having declared the injustice he had met withal, contrary to all religion, honour, honesty, and conscience, he then told his relations he was resolved, by God's help, to embrace that religion, for which he had been a sufferer before he was a professor; for that religion could not be of God that did so evidently set up the kingdom of the devil. At
which

which they all rejoiced, and Deidamia more especially; who passionately embracing him, said, "her father and mother were of the same mind with him." At which Alanfon was the more encouraged. But lest their adversaries should come thither to search for them, they withdrew into a small village and lived obscurely, while La Mont could hear of a convenient vessel, to transport them into a country where they might enjoy more liberty.

You have before heard, how Bernard the Gardener was sold to a master of a ship, belonging to one of the French plantations in the West Indies. Before we conclude, we will briefly shew how God's providence watched over him for good also. In his voyage at sea, they met with so extraordinary a storm, that all expected present death, but Bernard was very calm, putting up his fervent prayer to Almighty God, which was followed by a very great serenity and calmness. This made the master have a respect for him, and oftentimes discoursed with him, his behaviour being always sober, and his discourse instructing. The master having made his voyage, sold Bernard for a slave, and having staid there about two months, returned again to France, but the discourses and behaviour of Bernard had made so deep an impression on his mind, that he was greatly troubled for having sold him, insomuch that he could not rest, until he had taken a solemn resolution, the next voyage he made, to bring him back; and accordingly the next year, making another voyage thither, he made it his business to enquire after him,

and having found him, asked if he was willing to have his liberty, and return to his own country? Bernard replied, he never was in love with slavery, but was contented under it whilst God's providence ordered it so; but if he might have his liberty, he would chuse it rather. Whereupon the master paid his ransom, and brought him back to France; nor was he a loser by it, for as a recompense for his kindness, it pleased God to make Bernard an instrument to open his eyes, and bring him to an acknowledgment of the truth. Bernard being again got into his own country, made it his whole business to enquire after the welfare of Alanson's family, and being told of the sufferings that had lately befallen them, he was extremely grieved, though at the same time, he could not but rejoice that they suffered in so good a cause. And speaking of them to his old christian friends, he was told by one of them, that both the Count and his Lady lived obscurely and in disguise in the neighbouring village; and that if he had a mind to see them, he would give him a note to the Gentleman of the house, upon which he should have admittance to them, or otherwise they would not be spoken with by any one. Bernard gladly accepted of his friend's kindness, and straightway went to the house, and delivered the Gentleman the note; the purport of which was this—That he had known the bearer many years for a faithful friend and brother, and that he had been formerly a servant of the Count Alanson's, and had a great desire to see his lady, which he might safely
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let him do. Upon reading this note, the Gentleman desired him to come in, and sent up one of his servants to acquaint Deidamia, there was one below desired to speak to her; up which Bernard was presently called upon. Deidamia was mightily surprised to see Bernard, whom she thought she should never have seen more, and very much rejoiced at it; introducing him to her lord, and afterwards to her parents, who all made very much of him, and were glad to see him. And having communicated the various providences of God to one another, since they parted, they all blessed the Lord for his Goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. And afterwards consulted how to procure a vessel, to convey them out of danger. Bernard gave them an account that the master of the vessel, which brought him to France, was also converted, and that now his vessel lay ready to sail for Denmark, and he was sure he would be glad to serve them. To this they all agreed; and thereupon Bernard went to the master of the ship, who readily consented to carry them, and ordered their Goods to be brought presently, and themselves to come aboard at midnight; at which time Bernard conducted them to the ship, and then went abroad with them in the quality of a servant; and soon after, the wind serving, they set sail for Denmark, where being arrived, and tarrying a few days, they hired a Dutch vessel to carry them to Rotterdam, and from thence they went by a boat to Utrecht, which being
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a pleasant place, and a very good air, they resolved to settle there.

Thus, Courteous Reader, thou hast had a brief, but true relation of the mercy and goodness of God to that noble family, which is the subject of this narrative: and he that reads it throughout seriously, will find cause to make the same observations that David did of old, *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace*, which the apostle St. James farther exemplifies in his epistle, *You have heard of the patience of Job, and seen the end of the Lord how he is very pitiful and of tender mercy*. Here you have seen the great distress of Deidamia, and here you have seen the Goodness of God in her deliverance. Here you have seen the Count Alanson rifled of all his estate and possessions; and here you have seen how God has graciously made it up, in giving him that faith which is more precious than the gold which perisheth.

But I cannot conclude without giving you an account of the judgment of God upon Fronovius and Antonio, that others may fear and give Glory to God.

Fronovius, after the seizure of Alanson's estate, and his departure into Holland, returned into those parts, but finding himself hated by all men for his villainy, he retired into Normandy, where soliciting his landlord's daughter to yield to his lust, and she refusing it, he took an opportunity to ravish her, for which he was hanged without the gates of Roan.

And

And as for Antonio, though he escaped the justice of man, he could not escape the justice of God, for falling distracted a little time after, he confessed it was God's judgment upon him for the mischief he had wrought against his Lord Alanfon, and his virtuous Lady, saying, They had taken away to be saved, but he was sure to be damned; and so dashing out his own brains against a wall, he died miserably; both of them verifying the words of the inspired penman. *Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity.*

A BRIEF

A BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE
PRESENT PERSECUTIONS
OF THE
FRENCH PROTESTANTS.

THE restless malice of the great enemy of mankind, against the church of God, has been sufficiently manifested in all ages of the world; and began to exert itself first of all in Cain, who killed his brother Abel, because his own deeds were wicked, and his brother's righteous, as the holy scriptures inform us; and it has been his frequent practice, when he could not withdraw the people of God from the profession of the truth by the bait of worldly advantage, to raise a flood of persecution against them, by that means to extirpate them, if it were possible, out of the earth. Of which no people in Europe has in this age had more fatal experience than the poor Protestants in France, who have been so barbarously used by the blood-thirsty Papists there, that a true account of their sufferings will appear to the next age, rather like romantic fictions than (as indeed they are) realities. And there are two things in it that appear alike admirable; and they are, the barbarous rage and cruelty of the persecutors, and the invincible courage and constancy of the poor sufferers, who are so mightily supported by the divine Grace, that they not only triumph over all their tortures, but suffer joyfully

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the loss of all, as knowing that they have in heaven a better and more enduring substance. But I will recite briefly some instances of their sufferings.

Some they condemn to the Gallies, where they are coupled commonly with the vilest miscreants, condemned thither for the most flagitious crimes, whose fearful oaths and execrations are continually wounding their pious ears: there are generally five of them placed upon every form, fettered with a heavy chain of about ten or twelve feet long; they shave their heads from time to time, to shew they are slaves, and are not allowed to wear their hats or perriwigs: They have only beans, and nothing else for their food, with about fourteen ounces of coarse bread a day, and no wine at all. They are devoured in the winter by lice, and in the summer by bugs and fleas, and forced to lie upon one another as hogs in a sty; and every day tormented and threatened by friars and priests, who not being able to convince them by reason, think to do it by severity.

Some are put in prison, and kept in nasty dungeons and holes, full of mire and dirt, without any bed or straw to lie upon, and not suffered to have the least glimmering of the sun, or the light of a candle; and allowed so small a quantity of victuals, as is hardly sufficient to keep them alive. In this miserable case, without any pity to them, some have been kept above a year together. One of them being visited after a twelve-months imprisonment in this manner; by one called a director

director of conscience, just as they were going to bring him his small allowance, he could not forbear crying out, as soon as he saw him, Lord, in what a condition are you, sir! To which the poor sufferer replied, with a Christian fortitude, worthy of the cause he suffered for, "Could you but see the secret pleasure my heart experiences, you would think me too happy." The priest told him, the greatest sufferings did not entitle to the glory of martyrdom, unless he suffered for truth and justice. To this the poor prisoner replied, he granted it; but that was his case; the Holy Ghost so sealed it to his heart, that the very thoughts thereof supported him in the midst of all his afflictions: This person has, through God's providence, been since delivered; and has declared, that the consolations that God, out of his infinite love, afforded to him, were so great, that he little regarded the miseries he was reduced to, though he continued in that lamentable condition almost two and twenty months, without changing his cloaths, till his beard was grown as long as the hair of his head, and his face as pale as a plaistered wall; he declared also, that when he was delivered, the number of those chained to the Gallies for the sake of religion, was about three hundred and seventy, who glorified God in their sufferings, with an unparalleled courage and constancy.

F I N I S.

